

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: WI Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection **Application ID:** 13AC14572

Program Name: Wisconsin AmeriCorps Farm to School Program

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

- (+) The applicant's target population consists of rural students in grades K-12 who are obese and economically disadvantaged. The data cited supports a need and the data is compelling. Twenty-three percent of WI students are obese. The applicant cited BMI data obtained from a partner site (AmeriCorps Farms to School Program) which showed 3rd-5th grade students had obesity prevalence greater than the national average of 19.6 percent.
- (+) The applicant states that they have compared the most recent (2007-08) child obesity/overweight national data to BMI data at partner site locations to determine that obesity rates at the locations were 4% above the national average.
- (+) The applicant has targeted 14 communities that are predominantly rural, with higher poverty and adult obesity levels than the statewide average.
- (+) The applicant makes a case for the use of AmeriCorps Members being a highly effective means to solve the problem of implementing farm to school programming as schools do not have enough time or staff to do this function.
- (+) The roles and responsibilities of the members are clearly defined as seen with the expectation being they will promote and educate students about healthy local foods, teach nutrition education and recruit volunteers. Specific activities the members will be involved in are set forth in the application, giving the project clear direction of what everyone will be doing.
- (+) The applicant proposes that most sites will have two half-time members with different skills. One will provide nutrition education in school classrooms and the other will focus on community outreach, serving with the school food service director and local farmers to bring local food into the schools. The nutrition education is focused and structured. The outreach role includes a greater diversity of activities and opportunities for leadership.
- (-) It is unclear how the two half-time members at each site will coordinate certain activities and resources such as volunteers (shown as coordinated by the outreach member) for field trips and tastings (that appear to be coordinated

by the nutrition education member).

(+) The applicant cites extensive research to support its strategies for addressing childhood obesity. It also cites additional research on farm-to-school programs that shows a positive impact on teachers, parents and the community as a whole.

(+) A program evaluation done in partnership with two departments at the University of Wisconsin showed incremental improvements in student behaviors with more years of the nutrition education programming. This suggests sustainable changes increase with continued exposure.

(-) The applicant does not describe quantitatively the overall change proposed by the end of the three-year grant cycle – for participating students to have increased access to and consume more healthy foods – as anything different from the annual goals.

(-) The applicant does not provide criteria to be used to identify the subset of children taking the pre and posttests.

(-) The applicant does not explain why the goal will be maintained at 50 percent of participants having a change in food attitudes, when there will be a greater number of AmeriCorps members providing resources to the children.